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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001064

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/WATERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/04/2017

TAGS: KWBG PGOV KPAL IS PTER

SUBJECT: ABBAS APPOINTS JOINT FORCE COMMANDER TO IMPLEMENT  
"MOI SECURITY PLAN"

REF: A. JERUSALEM 866  
B. JERUSALEM 785  
C. JERUSALEM 728

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Tom Duffy, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) Summary. Palestinian security contacts and press report PA President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and PM Ismayil Haniyah agreed June 2 to create a "Joint Security Force," composed of Hamas "Executive Force" and Fatah "Special Force" personnel and led by retired National Security Forces (NSF) General Sa'id Saqr Abu Fanunah. President's Office contacts report Haniyah and Abbas discussed several names for a new Interior Minister (MoI), but did not decide on a candidate. Rashid Abu Shbak remains internal security chief, but contacts report Abbas and Haniyah discussed removing him in recent Gaza City meetings. End Summary.

MoI "Joint Force" Commander Appointed

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12. (SBU) Palestinian security contacts and press report President Abbas and PM Haniyah agreed June 2 to create a joint security force, composed of Hamas "Executive Force" and Fatah "Special Force" personnel. Haniyah's office told Palestinian newspapers that Abbas appointed retired NSF General Sa'id Saqr Abu Fanunah to head the force, and that he will answer to Haniyah in the Prime Minister's capacity as acting MoI. (Note: Haniyah has been acting MoI since Hani al-Qawasmi resigned May 14. End note). Press quoted Egyptian GID security coordinator for Gaza, MG Burhan Hamad describing the joint security force's mandate as the implementation of the MoI security plan, promulgated by former MoI al-Qawasmi.

No Agreement on New Interior Minister or Abu Shbak

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13. (SBU) President's Office contacts report Haniyah and Abbas discussed several names for a new MoI, but did not decide on a candidate. Gaza-based newspapers reported June 3 that Haniyah's spokesman Ghazi Hamad was being considered for the position, but Hamad and other Hamas officials denied these reports.

14. (SBU) MoI Director-General for Internal Security Rashid Abu Shbak, whose resignation was rejected by President Abbas May 28, remains in office. According to President's Office contacts, however, Abbas and Haniyah discussed removing him in recent Gaza meetings. (Note: Abu Shbak's position as legal commander of the police, Preventive Security and civil defense has allowed Fatah to retain control over these

forces, although Palestinian law puts them under MoI authority. Abu Shbak's effective command of these organizations has been a major Fatah-Hamas sticking point. End note).

Comment

15. (C) Palestinian media is reporting daily on Fatah-Hamas security cooperation intended to prop up the national unity government (NUG), but no current proposals seem likely to resolve the core issues, including command of the PASF and control over MoI directorates, that sparked the recent round of factional battles. Creation of this "Joint Security Force," an ad hoc body of Fatah and Hamas militias, seems more a gesture of support to PM Haniyah than a serious attempt to implement al-Qawasami's security plan. The "Joint Security Force" combines the Hamas "Executive Force" and various Fatah-associated militias that are illegal and separate from the PASF, which are unlikely to coalesce into an effective security body.

DUFFY